

Aether Software— Fast-Paced Growth



Industry analysts predict that the wireless market will grow rapidly at an annual compound rate of 17 percent over the next five years. By all estimates, revenues in this space could reach \$700 billion by 2005. As a front-runner in the wireless and enterprise computing markets, Aether Systems, Inc. is part of this phenomenal growth. The company has grown from 100 to 500 employees in the last year and expects continued aggressive growth. A well-designed and scalable communications infrastructure is essential for Aether's success.

Scalable, Simplified Communications

"Unified messaging was one of our biggest 'must have' requirements when we were looking for a new communications solution last fall," says John Cooper, manager of information systems at Aether. "We went with an IP-based telephone system from Cisco and wanted a messaging solution that it would integrate with easily. We also wanted a system that would allow us to start out small—with less than a hundred subscribers—and scale up later as we added new staff. Cisco Unity had everything we were looking for. And

because Cisco Unity works with a known quantity, Microsoft Exchange, I knew that it would be much simpler to manage since I wouldn't have to learn something brand new."

Getting More from One Inbox

Cisco Unity works with the desktop applications Aether employees use everyday, delivering all their voice, fax, and e-mail messages into their Microsoft Outlook inbox. And because employees can access and manage their messages from a desktop PC, touchtone telephone, or the Internet, Cisco Unity extends the value of their favorite communications tools as well. "Employees like Cisco Unity because it works with Outlook, a program they already know," Cooper notes. "It's also more convenient since they only have to check one place to get all their messages. When employees open their inbox, voice mail is right in there with e-mail—Cisco Unity brings everything together and makes it easy to use. Plus, they have lots of options for getting to their messages, whether they're at work or on the road."

"Having a system that allows me to keep administration in-house and still keep up with the rapid pace of growth is a huge win for us. Cisco Unity has also made it easier for me to do system installs and upgrades remotely, so far I've done three upgrades at two different sites without having to leave the office. Being able to upgrade systems from my home office saves both time and money."

—John Cooper, Manager of Information Systems, Aether Software



Easy to Use and Customize

Aether's exponential growth has compelled many employees to work remotely, or in shared office spaces. Many of them rely on ActiveAssistant, Cisco Unity's personal Web interface, to customize the system to fit their unique work environments. "The notification feature is especially popular with folks who aren't lucky enough to have wireless devices," says Cooper. "They can configure Cisco Unity to notify them of important messages at home. Salespeople have their messages forwarded to them in the field. And in-house, employees use ActiveAssistant when they want to change their outgoing greeting. Using the Web interface is much simpler than dealing with a long series of voice prompts."

Cisco Unity also features a Web-based system administration interface to help IT staff get their work done quickly and easily. "I have about 20 people on my team who can manage call handlers and mailboxes, run basic reports, and do port monitoring at all our sites," Cooper says. "They learned all these things on the job. Cisco Unity is so easy to use, my staff hasn't needed any sort of formal training to get where it is today."

Administration in Record Time

An ever-increasing list of new hires poses a number of challenges at the system administration level. New subscribers must be added to the system on a continuous basis, in addition to keeping up with regularly scheduled maintenance tasks. Cisco Unity's fully unified architecture helps simplify overall system administration. "The fact that Cisco Unity ties into our existing Microsoft Exchange server makes adding a new subscriber very straightforward," Cooper says. "With the Cisco Unity, Exchange, and Microsoft Windows NT server integration, I have the new user add process down to under a minute. Also, with the browser-based system administration console I can login to any machine from anywhere in the country to troubleshoot or change a user's mailbox properties—it's really convenient."

Realizing a Return on Investment

While Cooper acknowledges the challenges associated with calculating hard-cost returns on Aether's investment in unified messaging, he cites reliability and self-reliance as the two main areas where Cisco Unity is paying off.

"Downtime is not something we've really encountered at all this year with Cisco Unity," Cooper observes. "There's immense value in having a system that's always up and ready to route calls so that our customers can get the service they need as quickly as possible. That means our sales people don't miss calls either and each call they take impacts the bottom line."

According to Cooper, Cisco Unity has also dramatically reduced Aether's outsourcing expenditures. "In terms of the big savings for me this year, that's come with the self-reliance piece," says Cooper. "The fact that I can support Cisco Unity in-house and don't have to rely on a third-party vendor to come in and handle the care and feeding of my system makes a big difference. The time savings alone is a definite tangible in terms of investment return—now my staff and I don't lose time meeting with vendor—we can make changes to the system and have them take effect immediately, which helps everyone maximize their productivity. Also, if we can't do something ourselves, Cisco offers a good support structure that helps with tasks that go beyond our basic needs."

A Solution that Grows With You

Cisco Unity is built on a scalable platform for maximum customizability. It can grow with Aether, helping the company get the most out of its communications system. "Having a system that allows me to keep administration in-house and still keep up with the rapid pace of growth is a huge win for us," Cooper says. "Cisco Unity has also made it easier for me to do system installs and upgrades remotely, so far I've done three upgrades at two different sites without having to leave the office. Being able to upgrade systems from my home office saves both time and money."

As an integral part of the Cisco AVVID (Architecture for Voice, Video and Integrated Data) environment, Cisco Unity also offers the benefits of an open architecture. "With Cisco Unity, there are no cryptic command lines or key strokes to execute," notes Cooper. "I don't have to rely on proprietary hardware, I can grow disk space as I need to, I can use the management features in Exchange, and the combination of Cisco Unity and CallManager has really given us added flexibility to grow. Cisco Unity makes everything easier."

About Aether Software

- **Industry:** Software
- **Founded:** 1998
- **Location:** Headquartered in Vienna, VA, with offices in Atlanta, Boston, California, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, the United Kingdom, and Germany
- **Telephone System:** Cisco CallManager
- **Network:** Microsoft Exchange
- **Cisco Solution:** Cisco Unity

Aether Software, a division of Aether Systems, and formerly Riverbed Technologies, offers a new generation of software solutions that extend the accessibility of enterprise computing via wireless devices. Its ScoutWare family of products creates the infrastructure to deliver vital corporate information to anyone, at any time, anywhere and to any device. ScoutWare solutions today are assisting organizations worldwide in the healthcare, retail, financial, government, and other industry sectors, creating real solutions that embrace the future of enterprise computing. For more information, please visit www.aethersoftware.com.



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